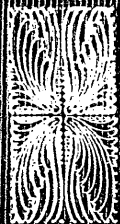


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THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM

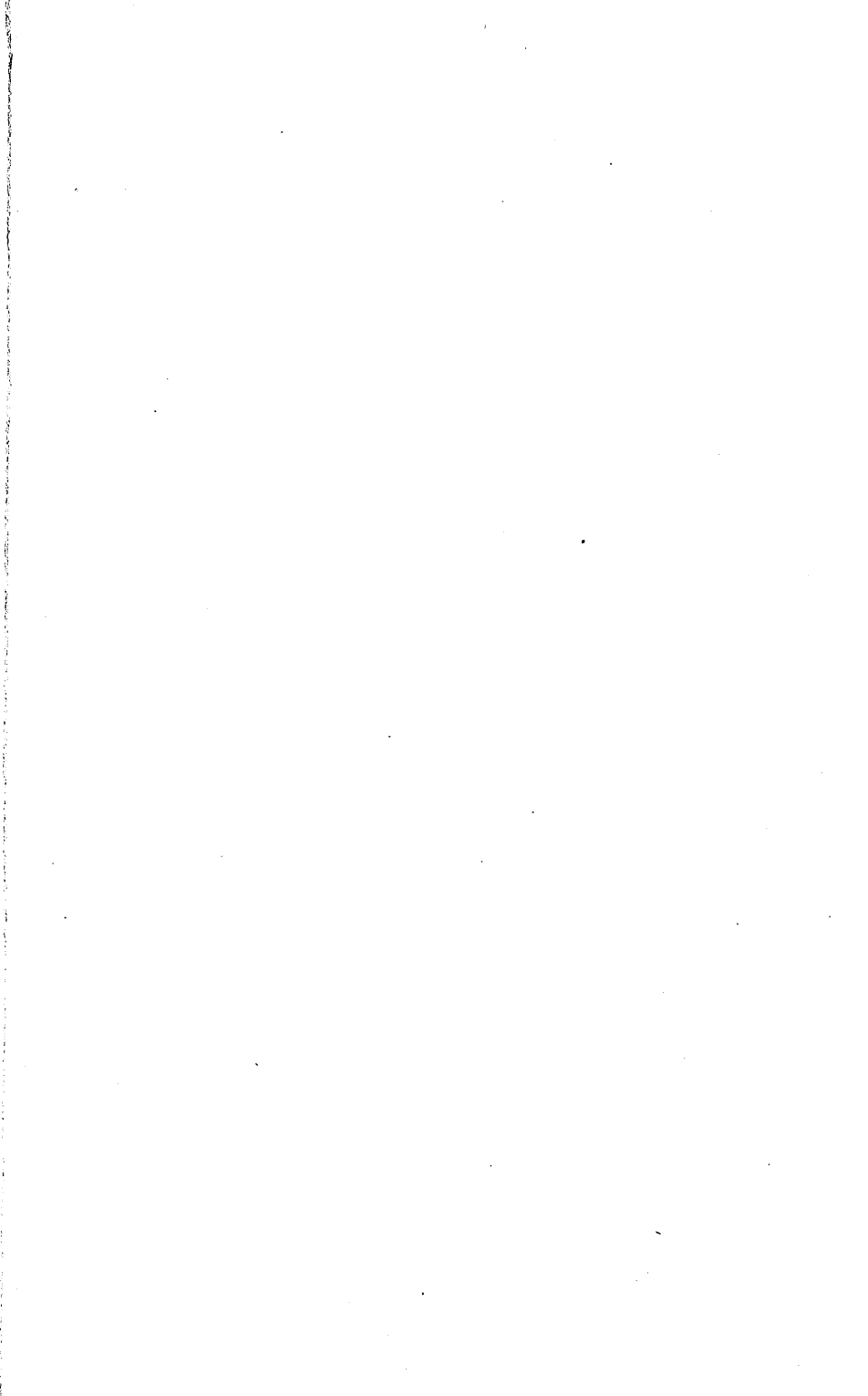
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THE
BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

*A BICENTENARY OFFERING OF THE NOVA SCOTIA
CONFERENCE.*

BY THE
REV. GEORGE OXLEY HUESTIS
Author of "A Manual of Methodism."

PRESENTED ON HIS 82ND BIRTHDAY, AUGUST 6TH, 1903.

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PREFACE.

THE bicentenary celebration of John Wesley's birth and the Methodism he introduced has prompted me to write, not a history, but such an outline of this providential and religious movement as will give a clear and distinct view of its origin, nature, and early results.

I have found, during a ministry of nearly three-score years, a vast amount of ignorance on this subject, and that increasing, notwithstanding the many lives of Wesley that have been published and the histories of Methodism accessible. Such books are very rare among our people, especially the poor. The price has probably been a hindrance ; indifference more so. The first difficulty is removed by this little book. Its careful reading will awaken a desire to know more of the details, and thus the second obstacle disappears. A good outline begets a desire to know the substance of a sermon.

I trust this epitome of the "Great Revival," will speedily

lead to a larger circulation of the admirable "History of Methodism in the Maritime Provinces," by the late Dr. T. W. Smith. I hope also that this year's review of old-fashioned Methodism will kindle anew the revival flame which is smouldering in the not very warm embers of the continued revival. It will come again. The prayer of faith, like that at the beginning, is the chief factor in bringing down Pentecostal showers.

G. O. H.

LUNENBURG, 1903.

Beginnings of the Great Revival Called Methodism.

IN order to ascertain as clearly as possible the origin of this marvellous spiritual movement, beginning in England early in the eighteenth century, and to trace its rapid development, I shall have to refer to events, personalities, and hopeful anticipations occurring somewhat previous to its visible manifestation.

There is no doubt concerning the fact that at this period England was morally in a deplorable condition. This truth is confirmed by the statement of a reliable, able historian of recent date: "When Wesley appeared the Anglican Church was an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into

heathenism, or a state hardly to be distinguished from it." Methodism checked this alarming decay, and infused new life and vigor into the Established Church; and, as the same writer says, "preserved from extinction and reanimated the languishing Non-conformity of the last century."

In the midst of this general decay of vital godliness there were some noble examples of eminent piety among both the clergy and the laity. The Wesley family were among this class. They were serious, devout, prayerful, strongly inclined to religion, attentive to its duties, yet destitute of the joy of God's salvation, as the mother of John Wesley confessed at a later period of her life. She was eminently adapted by intellectual attainments, spiritual power and example to train her son to become the human originator and effectual promoter of the most extensive and penetrating revival of religion the world has ever seen. If anything like hero-worship is at all allowable it must be so to the heroine as well as to the hero. Then Mrs. Wesley, equally with her son John, has the right to be thus honored.

A few incidents in her life and character will justify such remarks.

She was the mother of ten sons and nearly as many daughters. Two sons, John and Benjamin, died in early life, and when another was born she called him John Benjamin, and thus his father baptized him. But John never used the second name. Three years before John's birth Mrs. Wesley set apart one hour morning and evening for devotional reading, prayer, and fellowship with God, which she observed for years with as few interruptions as possible. For this secret communion with God she was rewarded openly.

John Wesley was born June 17th, 1703. When five years of age he very narrowly escaped death by the burning of the parsonage. He was the last rescued, just as the roof was falling in. The mother began the education and religious instruction of her children in very early life. Her mind seems to have been led to a more than ordinary attention to her son John from that time. In one of her private meditations, when he was about eight years of age, she mentions him in

a manner that shows how much her heart was engaged in forming his mind for religion. The meditation is as follows :

“EVENING, MAY 17, 1711.

“ ‘What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies ?’ The little unworthy praise that I can offer is so mean and contemptible an offering, that I am even ashamed to tender it ; but, Lord, accept it for the sake of Christ and pardon the deficiency of the sacrifice. I would offer Thee myself and all that Thou hast given me ; and I would resolve (O give me grace to do it !) that the residue of my life shall be all devoted to Thy service. And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that Thou hast so mercifully provided for than ever I have been ; that I may do my endeavor to instil into his mind the principles of Thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success ! ”

Her good endeavors were not without the desired effect, for about this time he desired of his father to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Wesley was wisely educated from his fifth to his

eleventh year by his mother, the next two years at the Charter-House, then at the Westminster School for a short time. In his seventeenth year, being intended for the Church, he entered Christchurch College, Oxford. He rapidly acquired knowledge and soon became proficient in almost every branch of learning, especially in classic lore. About that time one of the professors of the university said of him, "His perfect knowledge of the classics gave a smooth polish to his wit and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions." He had already begun to amuse himself with writing verses. His imitators in this line have been more numerous than celebrated.

While in college Mr. Wesley became very religious, and with his brother Charles and a few others determined to live holy lives. They met together frequently for prayer, reading the Bible, and partaking of the sacrament; were diligent in the use of all the means of grace and doing good, and very methodical in all their studies and work. This was something new in Oxford, which soon excited attention and called for many remarks. They were first spoken of as *Sacramentar-*

ians, then the *Godly Club*, and, finally, *Methodists*. And so, as the disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Antioch, the followers of John Wesley were first called Methodists at the University of Oxford. Mr. Wesley at this time realized not in experience the inward holiness he diligently sought, because he sought it by the deeds of the law and not by faith—the only way it can be obtained. He had the name, not as yet the essence, of Methodism; the latter he obtained not till many years afterwards.

In 1735 Mr. Wesley went as a missionary to Georgia, in the Southern States. Here he learned that he was not yet a converted man. This knowledge was obtained through a pious Moravian minister. He asked him, "Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Wesley was surprised, and knew not what to answer. Spangenburg, observing his embarrassment, asked, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" "I know He is the Saviour of the world," replied Wesley. "But," he writes, "I fear they were mere words."

Wesley returned to England in two years and was shortly after brought into a more satisfactory state of mind. Here is how it came about, as he tells us himself: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a meeting in Aldersgate Street, where a layman was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans ; about a quarter before nine, while listening to Luther's description of the change which the spirit works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Here is the central idea, the very essence of Methodism: a felt experience of God's pardoning love—conscious religion. This kind of religious experience had almost died out in England. Mr. Wesley was the chosen human instrument of kindling the revival flame which spread so rapidly in England and elsewhere.

John Wesley's mission was not to preach new doctrines, but to call attention to those essential truths of Christianity which were found in the Articles, Homi-

lies and Prayer Book of the Established Church. Some of these, especially justification by faith, etc., were seldom heard in the pulpits. Hence, the main design of the Christian religion was not being accomplished. God's work on earth, the saving of souls, was not being done. Just here commenced the revival flame.

Wesley's preaching was attended with such spiritual power that, as on the day of Pentecost, souls would cry out in the church, "What shall we do?" Sometimes this seemed like confusion, and the result was expulsion from the use of places of worship. Then the Wesleys and a few others, filled with the Holy Ghost, began to call sinners to repentance in the open air. The word of the Lord had free course; in every service multitudes were convinced of sin and converted—born of the Spirit. The poor especially, as in the time of Christ, had the gospel preached unto them; and they accepted it. God's revenue of praise was greatly increased. Hallelujahs and inspired amens abounded in London, Bristol, and Kingswood, spreading in all directions. The effect on the morals of the

people proved it to be the genuine work of God. Every true revival blesses the people in turning every one from his iniquities. Acts 3. 26.

Thus began, in 1739, in the greatest city in the world, through the instrumentality of John Wesley and a few contemporaries, the most remarkable revival of pure religion the world had seen since the third century. It continues in operation to this day, being realized and carried on not only by Methodists but also by many other branches of the Church of Christ.

Before I record its marvellous progress in the British isles, as I shall in the next chapter, I will give a few more historical facts respecting Wesley's personality, physical, mental and moral. As we are now commemorating his birth, in 1703, we wish to know all we can about the man and his work. In doing this, I desire not to encourage hero-worship, but simply memorial veneration, or grateful reflection on divine goodness to man.

John Wesley was a remarkably great and good man in every aspect in which we look at his person-

ality. This appears even in his physical nature. In person he was rather below the middle size, but very well proportioned. He had an excellent constitution, and seemed not to have the smallest quantity of superfluous flesh. In every period of his life his habit of body was the reverse of corpulent, and was expressive of the strictest temperance and constant exercise, never weighing more than 126 pounds ; was muscular and strong until a very few years before his death. He had a firm yet elastic step, and was a remarkably good walker. His face was beautifully attractive, even to old age ; one of the finest ever seen. In his countenance and behavior there was an admirable mixture of cheerfulness and gravity ; was well developed in his social nature, fluent in conversation, abounding with cheerfulness without levity.

His natural temper was warm and vehement, but grace enabled him to wisely control it. Outward persecution and opposition he bore without wrath, and apparently almost without feeling ; but when it came from his own preachers or people his displeasure was visible. He, however, never allowed the sun to go

down on his wrath or gave place to the devil; generally it was soon over. It has been said of him in this connection,—

“He carried anger as the flint bears fire,
Which, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.”

A man of more extraordinary character than Mr. Wesley probably seldom lived on earth. His piety was sincere and of a most exemplary kind, and for more than fifty years his unceasing, great, and various labors were most astonishing. His direct ministerial toils exceeded those of any man of whom we have read or heard. For more than sixty years he constantly rose at four o'clock in the morning, devoting only six hours of the twenty-four to sleep, and, what none of his imitators can say, never lost a night's sleep during all that time. He could not be diverted from that health-giving practice. A gentleman once, desiring a lengthy conversation, managed to occupy with him a part of the same bed. Shortly after retiring, the conversation began, but soon ended. Mr.

Wesley, turning over to the wall, said, "Good night, brother, I came to bed to sleep."

His travelling was marvellous, several thousands of miles yearly, chiefly on horseback, until seventy years old. During the last eighteen years he drove in a carriage most of the time. He preached twice every day, often three or four times, altogether over 40,000 times. Had he taken a different text every time, there would not have been sufficient verses in the whole Bible to supply the demand. From his journals we learn that he frequently repeated his sermons, which any itinerant is justified in doing, especially a pioneer evangelist. The increase of those having "itching ears" for something new will not allow it in our days. Hence, some of the essential old truths are evaporating from the pulpit.

John Wesley was a great preacher, and in this line of gospel work has done more to reform and make effective this divine calling than any other man since the days of St. Paul. He popularized this divine institution, elevating it to its proper position in Christianity, which had been reduced by sacer-

dotal influences to a lower position in soul saving than sacraments or ritualism.

His attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy, his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive. His voice was not loud, but clear, masculine, and agreeable; his style, neat, perspicuous, and fascinating. When he had time to make proper preparation for the pulpit, he was admirable; but sometimes, this not being the case, he fell short of his general excellence. Yet, when heard on such an occasion, one capable of testifying remarked, "It was not a masterly sermon, yet none but a master could have preached it." His sermons were not lengthy, seldom more than thirty minutes. His prayers were also short. He advised his preachers not to exceed in that exercise in public more than five or six minutes. He has not many imitators to-day. In point of great, extensive, and long-continued usefulness, he has had no compeer.

In all his studies, labors, writings, and preaching he had one object in view: to propagate the Gospel of Christ—

“To spread eternal truth abroad,
And bring a guilty world to God.”

He observed so rigid a temperance, and allowed himself so little repose, that he seemed to be above the infirmities of nature and to act independently of the earthly tenement he occupied. His zeal was not a transient blaze, but a steady and constant flame. The ardor of his spirit was neither dampened by difficulty nor subdued by age. This was ascribed by himself to the power of divine grace; by the world to enthusiasm. Oh, for more of such enthusiasm in this religiously quiet age! He was well qualified to excel in every branch of literature, well versed in the learned tongues, in metaphysics, in oratory, in logic, in criticism, and in every requisite of a Christian minister. These attainments, however desirable, furnished not the more important and essential qualification. They were only subsidiary to the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was ever the fire, the penetrating influence of Methodism, the “Great Revival.”

In Wesley’s style in the use of language we find he used more freely the Saxon than any other.

Hence, his preaching was pathetic, instructive, and persuasive, admirably adapted to the age in which he lived. It has marvellously influenced the expressions of religious thought ever since. In recent years the pulpits and press of Methodism are not imitating so closely as formerly the clear and impressive style of John Wesley's sermons and definitions of doctrine. Perhaps the divergence is in the line of improvement. The writer doubts that. He still prefers morals to ethics, and conversions to character building.

This remarkable man of God was sent to perfect the reformation begun by Luther, who restored to the Church the eliminated doctrine of justification by faith, but failed to give prominence to its experimental realization. Luther's reformation was a mental change in the head; Wesley's a moral one in the heart, the throne of the spiritual nature.

Wesley's personality exhibited very prominently both phases of humanity, the human and the spiritual. He was complete in both, without any serious deficiency. In the estimation of God, through grace, he was faultless, but not so in the estimation of man.

In a book on the life of this great and good man, published by one of his contemporary preachers, Jonathan Crowther, we have this remark: "I do not say he was without faults, or above mistakes; but they were lost in the multitude of his excellences and virtues."

In the idiosyncrasies of his mental constitution there was a larger amount than usual of the cheerful, vivacious, buoyant, or, as we now speak, optimistic feeling, with a talent for wit which he checked rather than cultivated. One illustration of its exercise shows that it was genuine.

Once two young men on horseback dashed along with great speed, seemingly determined to run him down. As they approached he stepped out of the road. They halted, and one said, "We never step out of the path for fools." "I always do," replied Mr. Wesley. He never indulged in "foolish talking or jesting," or even punning or making conundrums. Once only have I read of his approach to this dubious region of thought. One time he had to lodge with a very poor family, I think the name was Jackson. In

the morning the hostess asked him how he slept. He replied, "Your bed is just like an Englishman." The good woman tried for some time, but could not unravel the puzzle; but he did. "It will not budge."

Thus far we have been looking at the preliminaries, early existence, development, conversion, and preaching of John Wesley, the chief human instrument in the great revival of pure Christianity begun in England in the early part of the eighteenth century. We shall now briefly note some of the immediate and subsequent results of the kindled and increasing flame which burned up so many brush-heaps impeding the King's highway of holiness. The word of the Lord had free course and was glorified; that is, sinners were awakened, convinced of sin, and converted in every service. Very soon a five o'clock preaching service was established at headquarters, giving the working-classes a chance of hearing the Gospel before the commencement of their daily toil. Societies were formed everywhere with great rapidity. New converts were immediately brought into Christian fellow-

ship, one of the most potent factors in the spread of Methodism.

After the use of the repaired foundry building, the first Methodist chapel in the world, built by Methodists, was opened in Bristol in 1739. Soon other men sent by God came to Mr. Wesley's assistance in spreading the revival flame. He hesitated, because they were laymen, until he saw God was blessing their attempts at preaching equally with his own. Among the earliest was one John Nelson, an honest Yorkshire mason, converted under the preaching of Mr. Wesley, who became at once a flaming evangelist. Working by day at his trade among the stones, at night he pounded with the hammer of God's word on harder rocks, which were broken and polished for the erection of a spiritual temple.

This man's labors were signally blessed in his native shire. He formed as many societies, or classes, in Yorkshire during a little less than two decades than Wesley himself. This became the banner shire of Methodism until outrivalled many years afterwards by Cornwall. It is said that in 1770 it contained about

one-third of all the members in the society in the British islands. This wonderful work of God spread all over England and the adjacent isles so rapidly that in 1767 there were in the society 25,911 members and 104 preachers.

In no place outside of England did Methodism take so well as in Ireland. Something very similar to it was first realized there, as the experience of Saint Patrick testifies, more than a thousand years before. Mr. Wesley's first visit was in 1747. But one of his preachers, Thomas Williams, had preceded him, for he found 300 members in the society. Many successful pioneers of Methodism, and some of its great men, came from this kind-hearted, vivacious, and vigorous race. We record only the names of Gideon Ouseley, Thomas Welsh, Adam Clark, William Arthur, and Matthew Richey.

Torches carrying the revival flame in the army went first to Scotland, which Mr. Wesley visited at their invitation in 1751. The seed of Gospel grace took deep root, but very slowly, as Calvinism had not prepared the soil for the reception of the truths of

universal love and free grace for all. It came, however, to stay and produced good fruit. It was nearly one hundred years after before it obtained favor among that intellectually religious people. This we know from the pen of one of their most distinguished divines, Mr. Chalmers, who said of Methodism, "It is Christianity in earnest." The pulpit of Methodism in the Maritime Provinces has been privileged for the last thirty-three years with the best kind of theological training from a well-developed intellect and sanctified heart from Scotland. Dr. Stewart has done more in that line of Christian work for us than any other man in our history. Others of that nationality are among us for good, one of whom, Alexander Nicolson, very recently exchanged the toils of an active ministry for the rest that remains for the people of God.

The Isle of Wight was visited by Wesley in 1753. He found a small society already formed at Newport. One of his preachers had been on the ground before him. Among the early Wesleyan converts was Elizabeth Wallbridge, the "Dairyman's Daughter," of

world-wide fame, by means of the simple, touching narrative of Rev. Leigh Richmond. Elizabeth was brought to God through the instrumentality of the Rev. James Crabb, a Methodist home missionary, and was for many years a truly pious and consistent member of our Church. The writer of her very beautiful narrative altogether ignores that fact. I believe it has had a much wider circulation because of that omission. The prejudice, as well as wrath of man, is sometime overruled for the glory of God.

THE WEST INDIES.

I shall now attempt to trace, in chronological order, the providential progression throughout the world of this marvellous work of God. The first place outside the British Isles where Methodism was introduced was Antigua, a West India island belonging to Great Britain.

It came about, in the providence of God, as follows: In 1758 Nathaniel Gilbert, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Antigua, visited England. While remain-

ing with some slaves he had with him, he heard Mr. Wesley preach, was convinced of sin, and soundly converted to God. Similar blessing was obtained by two of the colored slaves that came with him to England. Mr. Wesley baptized one, and declared of her that she was the first regenerated African he had ever seen, remarking, "Shall not His saving health be made known to all nations."

In 1760 Mr. Gilbert and the slaves with him returned to Antigua. Methodist-like he soon began to work for God. He held meetings at his own house, praying, reading the Scriptures, and exhorting the people to turn to the Lord. The converting power of God came down upon them, and soon two hundred members of society were meeting in class. He and two colored females looked after this increasing flock for eighteen years, when John Baxter, a shipwright and Methodist local preacher, came from England in 1778. He was a very successful worker in the gospel vineyard. Through his efforts, in 1783, the first Methodist chapel in the torrid zone was erected.

Here was a society of Methodists existing and

flourishing spiritually for over twenty years without an ordained minister. Such was the case often with early Methodism. But a change was at hand. In 1786, Dr. Coke left England, with three missionaries, for Nova Scotia; but the providential, powerful, furious north wind would not permit him to land when near Halifax, but drove the ship to Antigua, where the Methodists, nearly a thousand in number, were earnestly praying for ministerial help. He arrived there on Christmas day, after a most tempestuous voyage of nearly three months. The newly-arrived preachers were left there, and thus Methodism was speedily introduced into most of the West India Islands, where it has realized most glorious success in saving sinners.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The next place where this revival flame was kindled was Newfoundland, Britain's oldest colony. One of Ireland's sons, Lawrence Coughlan, a very devoted and excellent preacher, willingly complied with Mr. Wesley's request to go as a missionary to that island.

Mr. Wesley wished him to be ordained, but the bishops would not grant the favor; and not seeing it his duty, as he did a few years afterwards, to do it himself, he requested it of Erasmus, a bishop of the Greek Church, who was then on a visit to England. Coughlan was ordained, but, I believe, afterwards doubted its validity. He was evidently, however, in the true succession, for God soon gave him souls for his hire and seals to his ministry. He came in 1765, and returned to England in 1772. But the revival power continues, while thousands on earth and many more in heaven, are praising God that Methodism ever came to Newfoundland.

Thus far, twenty-five years after its commencement, Methodism had touched no continent (except for a short time in the army, while at Flanders, in 1745), but only the isles of the sea. Thus was fulfilled the beautiful, prophetic hymn of Dr. Watts, written not long before this period :

“ Ye islands of the northern sea,
Rejoice ! your Saviour reigns ;
His word, like fire, prepares His way,
And mountains melt to plains.”

AMERICA.

The very next year (1766) after this holy fire began to burn in Newfoundland it was kindled on the continent of America, in New York. Irish immigrants of Teutonic-German extraction came to the New World to find better homes than Ireland could give them. Two of the chief names were Heck and Embury, a local preacher. Shortly after, Captain Webb, an Englishman belonging to the army, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, greatly assisted in spreading the truth abroad. About the same time another Irishman, Strawbridge, was kindling the fire in Maryland and elsewhere. No field in the world was better adapted for Methodism than America. Its triumphs and progress exceeded that of any other country. So much so that in twenty-five years from the beginning (1766) the number of members in the society was about 25,000, while those of Britain and her colonial islands had increased from the beginning (1739), in fifty-two years, to not more than 76,000, showing a much larger rate of increase in America than in the Old Country. That increase has continued till to-day, when the Methodists of

America outnumber those of all other countries combined.

Recently an Episcopal clergyman in England was greatly surprised on hearing a gentleman say there were over 30,000,000 Methodists. He replied, "You surely mean thousands, not millions." "Yes, millions," said the other. Here Methodism has had free scope, and the revival flame has spread everywhere. Had not this work of God been seriously hindered by an irreligious population, largely from the slums of Europe, this marvellous, self-sufficient country would ere this have been the holiest nation on earth. Perhaps it is so now. My largest optimism is stretched in saying or thinking so.

In 1768, at New York, was opened the first Methodist chapel in this Western world, on John Street, not far from Wall Street. It still exists, at least portions of it; and some of its old Methodism still remains, as I can testify from experience. On the first Sabbath of October, 1892, there seemed to be a peculiar solemnity and sanctity in the place while the writer was preaching the word and assisting in administer-

ing the Lord's Supper. It is one of the most pleasing memorials of a lengthened ministry.

CANADA.

In 1779, thirteen years after the beginning of Methodism in New York, the revival flame broke out in Amherst, County Cumberland, Nova Scotia, in connection with prayer-meetings. They were conducted by a few live Methodists, emigrants from Yorkshire, England, who came out in 1775. For many months these services were held before the fire came; but it did come with power and saving grace to more than five-score souls. There was no preaching, because they had no preacher; but among the converts there was one in embryo. He soon began (1781) to exercise his gifts and grace in exhortation and prayer, and in a few months to preach the glorious Gospel of Christ. He had not all the qualifications since considered necessary for the holy calling, but the essential, most important one, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Hence William Black became the apostle of Methodism in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

He also, ten years after his first sermon, became the instrument of reviving, strengthening, and enlarging the decaying cause in Newfoundland.

The work of God, thus commenced, rapidly spread throughout the Maritime Provinces. This was a little in advance of any other Methodist society in the Dominion of Canada. The first Methodist chapel in the Dominion was built in Point de Bute, opened and deeded to John Wesley, 1788. This was four years after he made the famous Deed of Declaration, placing it in the highest court in the Kingdom, which incorporated the Methodist societies into a complete separation from the Church of England for ever.

The second was opened at Sackville, 1790, by Rev. James Mann, who, with his brother John, came from New York to Shelburne in 1783.

The third was opened in Halifax (1792) by Rev. William Jessop, whose text on the occasion was, "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar."—Gen. 19. 23. It was afterwards generally known as Zoar Chapel. The four hymns used in that service, composed by Mr. Jessop and a local preacher

named Caudle, are now in my possession. The writer fifty-three years ago (1850) often occupied that old-fashioned, elevated, upright pulpit. Halifax soon became the headquarters of Methodism in the Maritime Provinces. Here has reposed the dust of the Rev. William Black since 1834.

Is it, then, really true that Methodism found its way into Nova Scotia (Cumberland) before it reached any other part of the Dominion? Yes. But was there not a Methodist preacher in Quebec before that? There was a Mr. Tuffy, officer in the British Army, who came there one year before Mr. Black, of Amherst, began to preach. He came there in 1780, one year after the great revival, where William Black was converted. He remained three years, then removed with the army, when those who had been his hearers were scattered abroad, Methodism not having been permanently established, as it was about twenty years afterwards. When Mr. Tuffy arrived at Quebec, there were 150 Methodists meeting in class in Amherst. I therefore claim that in my own native county, Cumberland, Methodism was first established in this

Dominion. The revival flame, with somewhat lessened intensity, continues to burn.

This tree of the Lord's planting began to grow in Ontario in 1786, under the culturing care of a local preacher, an Irish soldier named Neal, and shortly after of McCarthy, of the same nationality. Its branches spread out rapidly in all directions. About the close of the century it found its way to Montreal and Quebec, where it still flourishes. At present nearly a million members and adherents repose under its branches in the Dominion, three-fourths of them being in Ontario.

If the coming of an individual Methodist or family means the beginning of Methodism in a place, Newport, near Windsor, Nova Scotia, has that honor. John Smith, who often in Yorkshire, England, led the singing in Mr. Wesley's services, and whose wife was a convert of John Nelson's, came here in 1773, six years before the great revival at Amherst. He continued to reside there for nine years, when Mr. Black appointed him the first leader of a class in

Windsor. His descendants have been prominently engaged in nurturing and extending this work of God ever since.

I am aware of only another similar case, Benjamin Chappell, from the old foundry in London, who came to Charlottetown, P.E.I., in 1775. That live coal, with some others that came after, helped to kindle the fire which Christ came to send on earth. It still burns with "inextinguishable blaze."

AFRICA.

The next place where this revival flame burst forth was in the then dark continent of Africa, in Sierra Leone. It came in live hearts from Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Some remarkable providences are traced in this unique movement. More than a thousand colored people came with the Loyalists from the States in 1783. There were many Methodists among them, as Mr. Black found when he visited them the same year. One colored man among them, so lame and crippled that he could neither stand nor walk, was preaching with wonderful power and success. He was called

"Old Moses." Scores were converted; fourteen classes were meeting in Burchtown.

As that community was facing inevitable starvation, the British sent 1,100 of them, in 1792, to Sierra Leone, the land of their forefathers. Two white local preachers accompanied them. These facts I learned from George Jolly, a devoted colored local preacher in Shelburne, when I was his pastor (1847). This strong man often carried on his back to his preaching places that marvellous man, "Old Moses."

In this way the great revival broke out in West Africa. Thus the light that travelled westward from Africa in the days of yore now returned to fill the vacuum of its exit.

About twenty years after their arrival at Sierra Leone, in answer to a request, the English Conference sent them a preacher. When Mr. Warren came he found the old fire still burning. Two chapels had been built, and Methodism was in a fairly prosperous condition. That mission has been a successful one, its influence extending in the direction where the eunuch carried the gospel nearly 1900 years ago.

AUSTRALIA.

The next place where Methodism began its regenerative work was in the southern world, Australia. Its preliminaries were remarkable, illustrating the peculiar providence of God. The devil evidently overshot his mark when he prompted an intelligent lawyer in Dublin to commit forgery, which then incurred a death penalty. He was imprisoned, and while awaiting his trial and sentence, was visited by the agents of Methodism, who were instrumental in leading him to Christ for salvation from sin. He obtained it. Through their influence the sentence of death was commuted to transportation for life to a penal colony in Australia. He took with him a new heart, a Bible, a hymn book, considerable knowledge, and good mental ability. He arrived in 1812, and, Methodist like, began at once to work for God; told the people he had found Jesus, and invited them to seek and find Him too. Soon a class and prayer-meeting were in operation. Many souls were brought to God before two years elapsed. A request was sent to the English Conference, in 1815,

for a preacher, and the Rev. Mr. Leigh was sent to them. The work soon spread amazingly. It has now reached magnificent proportions in that portion of our world so thickly studded with islands. The people there can now sing as heartily as we can the hymn of Watts already referred to, by only changing the "Northern" to "Southern" seas.

ASIA.

Let us now inquire about the entrance of Methodism into the earth's largest continent. This form of religion originated there in the first century of the Christian era, but retained possession only a few hundred years, until it was so strangely eliminated and corrupted as to turn its spiritual essence into materialistic formalities. Methodism now attempts to bring the old religion back and plant the standard of the Cross in India. Dr. Coke, the most thoroughly missionary man that ever lived, started from England in 1814, with six others, carrying the Gospel with them. On the way, near India, Dr. Coke was found dead in his berth. His body was committed to the

deep on the Indian Ocean, leaving the six missionaries lonely and disheartened. They remained in Bombay for one month, then found their way to Ceylon, where the revival flame was kindled, which has been burning ever since with increasing power and brilliancy.

This mission was blest with very early success. The first sermon preached by one of the six, Mr. Clough, while in Bombay, was the means of the conversion of an intelligent, educated native, who became a very devoted and successful preacher of the gospel, the first native Methodist preacher in India. Great success soon followed the establishment of the mission at Ceylon. The flame has spread over most of India, the ratio of increase being greater of late years than formerly. A missionary from the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, who had returned after an absence of a few months, baptized 1,700 converts in one week, 800 at one service. India with its millions was given to the English for evangelization, and they, in conjunction with their vigorous offspring in the West, are doing the work.

SOUTH AFRICA.

In tracing the course of this wonderful revival of earnest, living Christianity we touch the Dark Continent again, this time in its southern extremity. The Dutch had possession of this vast region of country for many years; but it was taken from them twice, the last time in 1806. The London Missionary Society commenced its labors some years before the Wesleyans. The first Methodist Missionary to South Africa was Rev. John McKenny, in 1814, but such was the jealousy of the Government authorities that the missionary was not allowed to open his commission. After waiting a few weeks for the opening of the door he was ordered to go to Ceylon.

The next year, Rev. Barnabas Shaw, with his wife, came to Cape Town; but His Excellency declined to give him permission to preach. He naïvely says: "Having been refused the sanction of the Governor, I was resolved what to do, and commenced without it on the following Sabbath. My congregations at first were chiefly composed of pious soldiers, and it

was in a room hired by them that I first preached Christ and Him crucified, in South Africa." He soon, however, perceived that there was no prospect of success in the place, and began to long for an opening to preach among the natives in the interior. Soon the way opened. The Rev. Mr. Schmelen, of the London Missionary Society, arrived in Cape Town from Great Namaqualand on a visit, and he made such representations of the openings for missionary labor in that country that Mr. and Mrs. Shaw resolved to accompany him on his return, according to his kind invitation. A waggon and a span of oxen, with other necessities, were purchased for the long journey. On the 6th of September, 1815, they started, accompanied for some distance by a few friends from Cape Town.

The missionary party had pursued their toilsome journey for nearly a month, and had crossed the Elephant River, when, on the 4th of October, by a remarkable providence, Mr. Shaw found an opening for a suitable field of labor. He actually met with the chief of Little Namaqualand, accompanied by four men, on his way to Cape Town to seek for a Christian teacher.

being aware of the advantages which other tribes had realized by the reception of the gospel. Thus was the vital flame of the great revival kindled in South Africa. It has prospered amazingly, and spread through all that region. If I am rightly informed by a visitor to that country recently, there is one town in Eastern Africa (Durban) having sixteen Methodist churches, only one less than the Anglican Church.

The prayer in Bishop Heber's hymn for deliverance from "error's chain" is being answered

" Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand."

Soon we shall cease using the words "Dark Continent."

LESSER BRITISH ISLES.

Before noticing the introduction of Methodism into the European continent I will speak of its providential admission into some of the islands contiguous to Great Britain.

First, the Isle of Man. A native who had taken up his residence in Liverpool, in 1775, on hearing the first

Methodist sermon he ever heard, was convinced of sin and, by faith, obtained justifying grace. Desirous that his countrymen might know the blessedness of this new, unpopular religion, he sought to have a missionary sent, but could not obtain one. He then applied to a zealous local preacher, named John Cook, who complied with his request. God was with him and the revival flame was soon kindled and spread. Two years afterwards Mr. Wesley visited the place and greatly rejoiced at what God had wrought. The fire thus kindled has continued to burn ever since.

Then the Scilly Isles, first visited by the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, who was stationed at St. Ives, in Cornwall. On his second visit, 1778, a class was formed and a circuit established. Mr. Sutcliffe, in his last visit, purposed remaining there three weeks; but, as providence would have it, stayed three months. The only clergyman there being in poor health, the Methodist minister occupied the church occasionally, but chiefly the court-house. Numbers were brought to the experimental knowledge of the truth. Mr. Sutcliffe was obliged to live at the inn, and, on leaving, the pro-

prietor was so deeply impressed with the excellence of his religion that he was politely told there was "nothing to pay," and that the laborer was worthy of his meat. The population not being large, one minister has been sufficient to look after Methodism there.

Methodism was introduced into the island of Jersey by one of its natives, who went to Newfoundland as a trader. While there he was convinced of sin under the faithful ministry of the Rev. Lawrence Coughlan, who had been sent there as a missionary at the instance of Mr. Wesley. Pierre Le Sueur returned to Jersey, in 1773, with an awakened conscience; but his friends and neighbors, to whom he spoke of a change of heart, thought him mad, and he looked in vain for counsel or sympathy till another convert, named John Fentin, came from Newfoundland, who afforded him the help which he required. They began at once to work for God. Their conversations, prayers, and exhortations, produced considerable excitement, and in the course of a week or two twelve persons were awakened to a sense of their danger

and joined them in their devotions. In 1779 a pious sea captain arrived in Jersey, who gladly united with the Methodists in their efforts to do good, boldly preaching in English, whilst Le Sueur continued his labors in French. In 1783 the little band of devoted Christians was further strengthened by the arrival of a few pious soldiers who had been recently converted in Southampton through the instrumentality of Captain Webb.

The Methodists of Jersey now wrote to England for a preacher, and when Mr. Wesley received the letter, Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., a wealthy Methodist layman, was present. This gentleman had been brought to God some time before and had just begun to preach, and, being able to preach in French as well as in English, appeared to be just the man for the Channel Islands. Mr. Wesley told him so, when he nobly offered his services and proceeded at once to Jersey. He had great success. As the work advanced, in 1786, Mr. Wesley sent Adam Clarke to assist Mr. Brackenbury. The revival flame spread over the whole island ; thus Methodism was permanently established in Jersey.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

A few years after this, under the auspices of Dr. Clarke, a little colony of Methodists came to Prince Edward Island and introduced Methodism into Murray Harbor. From that band came forth some very bright gems in the history of Methodism in the Maritime Provinces. I need but mention the names of two to justify the above statement, Avard and Desbrisay. Four of the last name became preachers of the Gospel—one a Church clergyman, the other three Methodists. Of the Avards, several were local preachers. One of the most brilliant, promising and successful preachers in Methodism was Adam Clarke Avard, who entered the work in 1817 and died at Fredericton, March 15th, 1821, aged twenty-one years. Thus the one little spark of the great revival flame that went in a solitary breast from Newfoundland in 1775 came back in many hearts to a contiguous isle after fifty years. May we not sing as gratefully of God's providence as Watts did of His saving power?—

“Thy works of grace, how bright they shine!

How deep Thy counsels, how divine!”

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.

Methodism had been introduced into Guernsey the year before (1785), when Dr. Coke, on visiting the islands, took thither a young French preacher named Jean de Quetteville, who had recently been brought to God and called to the work, and who was instrumental in the conversion of many sinners. In 1787 Adam Clarke visited Alderney, where he succeeded in planting the standard of the Cross amid much opposition and peril. Whilst the good work was thus advancing in Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney, the little isle of Sark was favored with a few sparks of the heavenly fire and the whole group became permeated with the leaven of Methodism. The origin and progress of this remarkable work of God was watched by Mr. Wesley with feelings of deep interest when in the eighty-fifth year of his age he paid a visit to the Channel Islands, accompanied by Dr. Coke; and when the venerable patriarch "saw the grace of God he was glad, and exhorted the people to cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart." The revival flame in these sunny isles between France

and England continues, with perhaps less intensity, to burn as it did more than one hundred years ago.

FRANCE.

Methodism found its way into France, as in many other places, through the army or navy. Among the prisoners who were taken by the French during the war with Britain, in the early part of the nineteenth century, were a number of pious Methodists. As early as 1807, some of these wrote home to their friends from the Arras prison, giving an interesting account of earnest exhortations, prayer and class-meetings, and the conversion of sinners who wished to unite with the society. Early in the year 1810, the Rev. William Toase, then stationed on Seven Oaks Circuit, received a very polite invitation from the commander of His Majesty's ship *Glory*, to visit and preach to the prisoners on board. This he did for the first time on the 7th of March, and the result of the experiment was so encouraging that he repeated his visit as often as possible. Thus the Gospel of Christ was faithfully preached to thousands of poor

captives in their own tongue. In the year 1816, De Quetteville visited Normandy and several other places with pleasing success. Shortly after arrangements were made to occupy several places on the coasts. In 1819 Rev. John Hawtrey was appointed to labor in Paris. He was afterward succeeded by Messrs. Cook, Toase, Newstead, and Methodism took hold, to remain till the present day. The work is prospering there more and more through others, as well as Methodists. The Huguenot spirit is returning to France. Hallelujah!

GIBRALTAR.

The Wesleyan Mission to Gibraltar was attended with circumstances of a very gloomy character in its commencement; but afterwards the sun of prosperity shone upon it, and it has been made a blessing to thousands, especially of the military, who have from time to time been stationed there. It was about the beginning of the nineteenth century that a number of soldiers then quartered there united in a petition to Dr. Coke that they might be favored with the

services of a chaplain. This led to the appointment of the Rev. James McMullen. He arrived there with his wife and child, after a stormy passage, in the month of September, 1804. On landing they found the yellow fever raging among the wasted population with more than its usual violence and malignity. The fatal disease had invaded almost every family, and there was scarcely a house in which there was not one dead. The missionary's little child had scarcely breathed the tainted air when it was seized with the malady. On the 10th of October, her anxious father, fatigued with constant watching by the couch of affliction, was himself prostrated with the fever, and on the 18th he was a corpse. Mrs. McMullen had borne up during these days of woe with wonderful fortitude; but at the hour which ended the life of her dear husband she was smitten with the shaft of the pestilence, and followed him, in a few days, to the tomb.

Four years elapsed before another attempt was made to establish a Wesleyan mission at Gibraltar. The Rev. William Griffith was the next preacher

sent. He was cordially received, and entered upon his work with pleasing prospects of success. In 1811 a chapel was erected and opened for divine worship. A succession of ministers followed Mr. Griffith. Among them one went from Nova Scotia, in 1820, the Rev. William Croscombe, who returned and spent many years in the country of his first adoption in 1810.

A remarkable instance of violent persecution against the Methodists in the army took place in Gibraltar one year before the first missionary was sent. A regimental court-martial was held, by order of Lieutenant-Colonel Ramsay, for the trial of Corporal James Lamb, Richard Russel, and three privates, charged with unsoldier-like conduct in attending a Methodist meeting contrary to regimental orders. And, strange to say, they were found guilty, and the sentence passed upon them was that the two corporals were to be reduced, and all the five men were to receive *five hundred lashes each* ! Former times were not better than the present. About this time some efforts were made to introduce Methodism into Spain

and Portugal, but very little was accomplished; and to this day it has very little foothold in those morally withered countries, where similar Christianity once prevailed.

MALTA—EGYPT—GREECE.

As early as 1824, the Rev. John Keeling was appointed to Malta, and the Rev. Charles Cook to Palestine, and the following year the Rev. Donald McPherson was appointed to Alexandria, in Egypt. In 1827, the Rev. Walter Oke Croggon was sent to Zante, and he was afterwards joined by the Rev. James Bartholomew, with the hope of extending the work to different parts of Greece. These interesting stations, with the exception of Palestine, which was never fully entered upon, were occupied for several years with different measures of success, but on the whole, the results were not such as to warrant their continuance, and they were consequently given up.

The station that was occupied longest by the Wesleyan Missionary Society was Malta, the island

where St. Paul was shipwrecked on his voyage to Rome and the inhabitants of which showed him and his fellow-sufferers "no small kindness." This place was favored with the labors of a missionary for about twenty years, and was given up in 1844, when numerous changes had taken place among the few English residents and the military, to whom his services were chiefly devoted. The natives of Malta were so completely under the influence of the Romish priests, who strictly prohibited them from attending any Protestant religious service whatever, that, with very few exceptions, they were inaccessible to the missionary, or perhaps he would not have been withdrawn from the island.

It is pleasant to be able to add that Malta, since 1869, has had a missionary, who tells us that soon after coming to the place he discovered between two and three hundred declared Wesleyans in the army, and in the navy one hundred and sixty-one. So that the revival flame is burning to-day, very different from the fire Paul kindled with a few sticks, out of which came a viper, which fastened on his hand. He

also kindled the same kind of spiritual fire which Methodism is doing everywhere.

EUROPE.

Methodism in Germany both in its origin and subsequent course appears to have been pre-eminently a child of Providence. About the year 1830, an industrious and respectable German, named Christopher Gotlob Muller, had occasion to visit England on business, and whilst in this country he was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of the Wesleyan ministry. On his return to Winnenden, in the kingdom of Wurtemberg, his native place, he made known to his friends and neighbors what a precious treasure he had found. Being a man of ardent temperament and unquenchable zeal, Mr. Muller exerted himself in every possible way to save the souls of his fellow-countrymen. He held meetings for exhortation, prayer, and Christian fellowship, in different places, at stated intervals, and the effects produced by his humble efforts were of a very extraordinary character. From the commencement

the special blessing of God rested upon the labors of His servant, and in a short time hundreds of sinners were savingly converted. For twenty-eight years Mr. Muller looked after the work, under the direction of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, by whom the necessary funds were supplied for carrying on the work. The revival thus begun continues to exert its soul-saving influence under the direction of the M. E. Church of the United States of America.

Methodism was introduced into Sweden in 1830, by Rev. Joseph R. Stevens, succeeded four years afterwards by Rev. George Scott, D.D., who was President of the Conference of E. B. America in 1866. He remained in Sweden twelve years, with considerable success; but persecution and intolerance drove him away. The M. E. Church of the States has for many years past had a very flourishing mission there and at Norway and contiguous places, so that Methodism is now warming the frozen north as well as the south of Europe.

Italy had long been regarded as an inviting field of labor; but for many years, like all other popish

countries, it continued effectually closed against the gospel. But after the revolution in civil government, which occurred a few years ago, a measure of religious liberty was allowed to the inhabitants, and a desire was expressed in many places for evangelical instruction. The Wesleyan Missionary Society gladly embraced the opportunity which presented itself, and entered the field by the appointment, in 1860, of the Rev. Richard Green to commence the new mission. During the next year Mr. Green was joined by the Rev. Henry J. Piggott, B.A., and the two brethren took extensive tours to collect information and seek the most suitable place to begin their missionary operations. At length they fixed upon Milan for their headquarters, and commenced their labors with sanguine hopes of success, being favored with the assistance of Signor Bosio, an Italian evangelist, who soon after joined them. The good work prospered, and has spread over the kingdom. The Methodists of the States have a large cause here, so that there has recently been held a Methodist Conference in the city of Rome. Genuine Christianity is spreading in Italy as

it did in Paul's day, though not so rapidly. There may be now, as then, some true believers in Cæsar's household. A Methodist minister was recently honored with a title somewhat similar to knighthood by the Government.

CHINA.

China, the largest, most populous, and most thoroughly pagan country on earth, until recent years was inaccessible and almost unknown to foreigners. The introduction of Christianity into that ancient and separate nationality illustrates strikingly the peculiar providence as well as the rich grace of God. As early as the year 1807, when the way began to open, the first effort was made by the Protestant Christians of Europe for the evangelization of China. This honor was reserved for the London Missionary Society, who at that period sent out the Rev. Robert Morrison, D.D., for the special purpose of securing, if possible, a faithful translation of the Scriptures into the difficult Chinese language. After many years of arduous and plodding perseverance this grand object was accomplished, and the name of Dr. Morrison will be handed

down to posterity as the apostle of China and the founder of the first Protestant mission to this extensive and populous country.

The Wesleyan Mission to China was organized at a comparatively recent period. This was owing, not to the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Society, but to the want of means. When, in 1845, China was thrown open to foreigners to an extent it had never been before, a strong desire was felt by many that our society should send thither a missionary; but at that time the entire resources of the Committee were more than absorbed by the claims of the work in fields already occupied. But the Holy Spirit was preparing an agent to enter the opening door. A pious young man in Yorkshire, named George Piercy, became deeply impressed with the conviction that he ought to give himself entirely to this work. This intense desire was confirmed by a communication from a few pious soldiers at Hong Kong, which led Mr. Piercy to attempt the journey at his own expense. He arrived at Hong Kong on the 20th of January, 1851. On

calling upon Dr. Legge, of the London Missionary Society, Mr. Piercy was received as a brother in Christ, and cordially offered a home in the Doctor's house till he could make suitable arrangements for his own accommodation in connection with his work. After residing about three weeks under the hospitable roof of his friend, the young missionary hired rooms in Hong Kong, one of which, containing about sixty persons, he turned into a preaching room for the English soldiers. At the same time he commenced visiting the sick in the hospital, and, under the direction of Dr. H——, applied himself to the study of medicine as well as to the acquisition of the language of the people among whom his lot was cast, that he might be more fully prepared for future usefulness. The Lord greatly blessed the labors of Mr. Piercy among the soldiers and their wives, and about twenty of them were formed into a society. Those among whom he labored showed a disposition to contribute to his support, and, although his own funds were expended much sooner than he anticipated, what they raised,

coupled with small sums sent by his friends in England, enabled him to devote all his time to mission work without engaging in secular employment.

At this stage of his evangelical labors, Mr. Piercy offered his services to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and after an examination, subjected to at that distance, involving a written statement of his Christian experience and doctrinal views, he was accepted as a candidate for our ministry.

Thus the revival flame of Methodism was kindled in the Chinese Empire. Shortly after, in 1851, other missionaries were sent by the Wesleyans and other branches of the Methodist family, especially the American, who number more at present than all the others combined. Thousands have turned from the worship of dumb idols to serve the living and true God. The followers of Confucius are beginning to see that a greater than Confucius is there.

JAPAN.

Japan was sealed to all missionary operations, and even commerce, until 1854, when Commodore Perry,

of the United States of America, opened it. Shortly after the M. E. Church entered and the revival soon began to flame. The blaze was greatly increased by the Methodists of Canada in 1873. It is still spreading. Marvellous tokens of the power of the Gospel have been manifest.

“Jesus’ love the nations fires.”

In this bird’s-eye view of the places where Methodism has touched I have avoided detail. To have done so in such countries as the United States, Australia, India, and some other places, would have swelled this epitome into a volume unnecessarily large. We have seen this wonderful revival, leaping, in sparks, from the old foundry in London, in every direction, towards the centre and ends of the earth’s surface, kindling a flame which, as Charles Wesley says,

“Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.”

or as Watts sings, in reference to early Christianity,

“So when Thy truth began its race,
It touched and glanced on every land.”

SOME MORAL REFORMS.

Having thus recorded the beginnings of Methodism in its itinerary round the world, I shall now with equal brevity refer to the beginnings of some other moral reforms which were elicited by the flame of this great revival.

And first of all, the Temperance Reform. John Wesley obtained from the only divinely inspired Book in the world the important truth that human beings should not "look upon" a certain kind of drink, because, not at the first, but "at the *last* it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Prov. 23. 31, 32.) Therefore, in the rules to govern his societies, one was avoidance of "drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity." He boldly denounced rumsellers as "murderers of His Majesty's subjects." That was a clear, logical, philanthropic, divinely inspired view of the real inwardness of the nefarious, ungodly, and destructive business which many humane

governments to this day encourage and uphold. God says, "Thou shalt not kill." Our rulers say, "You may, for so much money, do it with impunity." John Wesley being dead yet speaketh; and the tones of his voice are troubling the nations. He evidently saw that intemperance was one of the greatest self-inflicted curses of humanity, and, therefore, ought not to be tolerated; and the period, in the not distant future, is approaching when this darkest blot on our refined civilization will be wiped out.

That wise rule of John Wesley has been observed by the writer inviolate for seventy-three years—that is, from the ninth year of his age.

The origination of the Tract Society can be easily traced to John Wesley. He was a voluminous writer on a great variety of subjects, especially in the form of tracts, letters, sermons, journals, and thoughts on passing events. These were published under his own inspection and scattered widely throughout the kingdom and the colonies. This cheap circulation of religious literature has been ever since a valuable accessory in the progress of Christianity. Methodism

gave a wonderful impetus to this method of doing good. It has led to the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy, "Knowledge shall be increased." (Dan. 12. 4.)

Let not the press ignore or forget its debt to Methodism. It is impossible to estimate accurately the great good that has been done by the generous circulation of the hymn books, sermons, *Magazine* (now 125 years old), missionary reports and Journals. The last named gave shape to my religious life as no other book did except the Bible and the old hymn-book. In this line of duty we have doubtless gone on almost to perfection.

The Sabbath-school movement began in 1780, a few years before the decease of John Wesley. A conversation between Robert Raikes, a very religious Churchman, and Hannah Ball, a pious Methodist, on the streets of Gloucester, while looking upon multitudes of children misbehaving on the Sabbath, led to the first effort in this good cause. As quickly as possible the Methodists espoused the movement, and to this day their influence is felt everywhere in this inspired effort to save the rising generation from the numerous evils

around them. That grain of mustard seed planted in Gloucester, England, has grown to a great tree, larger than that which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. To God be all the praise!

Methodism had something to do with the origin and formation of the Bible Society in 1804. This took place thirteen years after Mr. Wesley's removal from earth to heaven. The diligent search of a Methodist girl, all the way from Wales to London, led to its institution. In no branch of the Church did it spread more rapidly than among the Methodists. This attachment has continued and increased to the present time. The result has been that there are more than a thousand times more copies of the Word of God in the world to-day than of any other book. John Wesley was emphatically a man of one book, and that book *the Book*—the Bible, the most loved book in Methodism. The hymn-book comes next, because there is so much of the Bible in it, beautifully expressed in mellifluous verse. The mysterious influence of John Wesley's personality incessantly permeates Methodism. "He being dead yet speaketh."

The centennial of the Bible Society will be celebrated next year, 1904. Its review will be glorious, presenting a continuous progression in numbers of copies published and dispensed, in a greater variety of languages than any other book on this planet. John saw this in his prophetic vision in Patmos, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth."

Methodism gave a marvellous impetus to the cause of missions. John Wesley was born with a strong predilection for missionary life, and engaged in the work before he knew the great secret of Methodism; but when that revelation of God came to his soul the feeling was intensified so that he could not think of taking a parish, and when urged to do so exclaimed, "The world is my parish." The missionary spirit is born in us when we are born of God. The love of Christ constrains us when it is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5. 5.) This accounts for the fact that Methodism is pre-eminently a missionary institution.

Work of this kind was undertaken by our people in England nearly fifty years before the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was formed, in 1814. The first missionary was sent to Newfoundland in 1765, the next two to New York in 1769. The collection at that conference, among the preachers, was probably the largest ever made for missions in proportion to the ability of the givers. This feature of Methodism is still retained, and, necessarily, growing missions are inseparable from collections. Methodism has awakened a spirit of liberality. Hence we often hear in this form of worship the scriptural call, "Now concerning the collection," (1 Cor. 16. 1), and we never heard it more frequently or louder than at the present time. This is a pleasing sign of the times, for this is a money-loving age.

In many other ways Methodism has greatly benefited Christendom, some of which are not generally recognized. It has influenced for good nearly every branch of the Christian Church. Doubtless it led to the establishment of the Church Missionary Society, in 1800. Fifty years ago I read in an English paper

that there were in the Anglican Church three or four hundred clergyman who had been converted among the Methodists. I have known a few cases in my own Province.

The holy lives and triumphant deaths in Methodism have greatly popularized experimental godliness, expressed generally by the word "conversion." Nearly all churches are now desiring to have it realized among the people, but some do not care to seek it after the old fashion. Even the Methodists themselves, in some cases, are endeavoring to bring it about by religious education; but they are signally failing. Spirituality in all churches is at a very low ebb. Why? Because of late years so few among professors of religion have received the Holy Spirit. If they are born again, they are born of the Spirit.

Whatever may be the cause, there is, without doubt, an alarming lull in the fact of "bringing sinners to God." This lull is being deeply felt at the present time. But there is hope, yea more, the sound of abundance of rain. The spirit of earnest prayer is coming upon Zion. The Lord will bless us.

Methodism has done more than any of the churches to cultivate the fellowship of saints, or as Paul expresses the idea, "the unity of the Spirit." (Ephesians 4. 3.) That lovely feature of Christianity is becoming more and more apparent. Some are endeavouring to develop it by external organic union. That might or might not increase the "unity of the Spirit." I fear it would not.

Thank God for the oneness already existing and increasing! The fulfilment of Christ's purpose in this respect will be realized not so much by the external as by the spiritual union. Hear His own ideas on the subject: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in *one* all things *in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." (Ephesians 1. 10.)

ORIGIN, NATURE, AND DEVELOPMENT OF
METHODISM.

THE glories of the Reformation
Were fading in Britannia's realm ;
Skeptical thought disturbed the nation,
Threatening the truth to overwhelm.

Uncertain sounds the pulpit uttered,
Unwisely mixed error and truth ;
Even these in speech were faintly muttered,
Arresting neither age nor youth.

On Zion's walls the watchmen sleeping,
The warning voice in silence hushed ;
The thoughtful few, perplexed, and weeping,
O'er fears aroused and hopes all crushed.

The general reign of pride and folly,
Growing forgetfulness of God ;
National outlook melancholy,
Presages of the coming rod.

Amidst this moral desolation,
From Oxford comes a hopeful gleam ;

John Wesley's soul, in perturbation,
Seeks Him, "Who did the world redeem."

Long sought by works, justification,
But not obtained until he saw
That grace through faith bringeth salvation,
Not mere obedience to the law.

Accepting pardon, without merit,
Reposing in the atoning blood ;
The witness of the Holy Spirit,
Cried, Abba Father, child of God.

Heart warmed with love, touched tongue of fire,
Confession of salvation came;
The Spirit's prompting, strong desire,
The heart-felt gospel to proclaim.

The simple truth inspired with unction,
Arrested thought, awakened mind;
Soon multitudes, in deep compunction,
Repent, believe, and mercy find.

In fellowship delightful meeting,
Midst fervent prayer and songs of praise,
With Christ in heavenly places sitting,
Triumphing in redeeming grace.

Arranged by guidance providential,
A form appears, instinct with life,
Retaining only truths essential,
Others not with salvation rife.

With vital power in operation
Circles of influence increase ;
Outcome of wise organization,
A silent secret of success.

Wise system, not of man's devising ;
The Master's plan John Wesley took ;
To Bible students not surprising,
He loved and studied most *one Book*.

Doctrines of grace, in combination
With other doctrines of the Word ;
No creature made for condemnation,
All may obtain the great reward.

In vain do Antinomians lecture
On sovereign grace and partial love ;
With holier zeal seraphic Fletcher
The doctrines of Arminius prove.

The gospel method of salvation,
Conviction, penitence and trust ;

Release from conscious condemnation,
Excluding all desire to boast.

Intense desire for inward cleansing,
The highest prize of gospel grace ;
Washing divine, and spirit's rinsing,
Essence of Christian holiness.

Thus purified from every evil,
Blameless in life, perfect in love ;
Destroyed by grace works of the devil,
Prepared for earth and heaven above.

Zealous of works, thus persevering,
Unless it works doubtful of faith ;
No declination ever fearing,
With footsteps in the narrow path.

Challenges holy competition,
The knowledge of the Lord to spread ;
More fond of union than division,
Here bigotry is never fed.

Magic of sacred song expressing
Happy experience, grace possessed,
The triune God for ever blessing ;
For faith, and hope, and spirit rest.

No apostolical succession

Flowing through muddy lakes is claimed,
A better warrant in possession,
Written epistles, souls redeemed.

Vouchsafed the constant smile of heaven,
The saving grace of God made known ;
Witness, ye thousands now forgiven,
That Jesus doth his servants own !

Intent that all should know the Saviour,
The tribes remote, as well as near ;
Truly, a heaven inspired endeavour,
The gospel publish everywhere.

The mission cause to life thus springing,
Early the Church to duty woke ;
The Lord the instrument is bringing,
He comes, the wise, heroic Coke.

No larger soul in smaller stature
Since Paul upon this planet trod ;
Heaven's love embellished every feature,
A nobleman, a man of God.

Biography's rich treasures given,
Awaken emulation's power ;

Silently spreading gospel leaven,
The Church's never failing dower.

Fletcher and Stoner, Bramwell, Pawson,
Benson, Watson, and Asbury;
Everit, Jackson, Newton, and Dawson,
Summerfield, Garretson, and Lee.

Nelson, Carvosso, Hick, Entwistle,
Of brilliant ones a galaxy,
Who like the stars above us glisten,
In glory's skies eternally.

A general blessing made to others,
Some hesitate the fact to own;
Children of God we call our brothers,
The friends of all, the foes of none.

Intent in scattering useful knowledge,
Embryo Tract Society;
Kingswood, the sons of preachers' college,
To adorn and strengthen piety.

The Arminian Magazine exposing
And burying errors of the day;
Firm on the rock of truth reposing,
Existing still without decay.

A wise itinerancy, displaying
In every place fresh energy ;
Similar truth to all conveying
With talent's strange variety.

Laymen, devout, zealous, and willing,
Freely God's saving truth proclaim ;
Their duty faithfully fulfilling,
A large increase to Zion came.

Developed well the social nature,
Fellowship, love feasts, class, and prayer ;
Remaining still the nomenclature,
And that which all delight to share.

No priests or prelates touch our Zion,
Scriptural authority is known ;
Jesus is Head, whom we rely on,
Our Prophet, Priest, and King we own.

Governed by reason, not by fancy,
The Word of God the rule of faith ;
Hating intensely necromancy,
More fond of life than shades of death.

To members all wisely forbidden
 The liquid poison and the trade ;
 No rule to earth brings more of Eden,
 Alas ! how often disobeyed !

Wiser directions are not many,
 "Get all, save all, give all you can ;"
 Quarterly shilling, weekly penny,
 Truly the apostolic plan.

John Wesley sought not separation
 From England's Governmental Church ;
 But when he ventured ordination,
 The satellite took outward lurch.

The famous Deed of Declaration
 Defined the lurch as severance near ;
 Henceforth a Church in isolation,
 Her course and work alone to steer.

From shackles free, filled with ambition,
 The ambition holiness inspires ;
 With footsteps firm, pursues her mission,
 Kindling the flame of gospel fires.

Exciting still surprise and wonder,

 This tree of Methodism fair ;

Millions its shadow now are under,

 Its leaves are healing everywhere.

Not yet fulfilled her God-like mission,

 Destined in providence to grow ;

Till *real* John's delightful vision,

 All nations their Redeemer known.

STATISTICS OF METHODISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD UP TO DATE (1903.)

Prepared by the Rev. G. H. CORNISH, LL.D. (See the second volume of his
admirable, correct, and complete "Cyclopedia of Methodism in Canada.")

	Ministers	Local Preachers	Members
Old World Methodism.....	5,594	50,243	1,108,640
Canadian Methodism.....	2,030	3,367	291,895
Australian Methodism.....	932	8,452	131,774
United States Methodism.....	40,451	44,645	6,245,578
Grand Total.....	49,007	106,707	7,777,887

As there are over three adherents, including children, for every member of the Church, there are more than 30,000,000 of persons called Methodists. What hath God wrought in 200 years by the hand of his servant John Wesley! To God be all the glory. Amen.





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